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Centennial Anniversary of the Congregational Church,
Atkinson, N. H. - 1875

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Historical Discourse,

WITH APPENDIX.

Congregational Church,

ATKINSON, N. H.

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED AT
ATKINSON, N. H.,
ON THE
CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

BY THE PASTOR, C. F. MORSE.

LAWRENCE, MASS.:
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Sociology Library = Social Science

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

"THERE SHALL ALSO THIS, THAT THIS WOMAN HATH DONE, BE TOLD FOR A MEMORIAL OF HER."—*Matt. 26: 13.*

The woman here spoken of was the modest and affectionate Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Moved by love, she annointed her Saviour with a fragrant and costly ointment. Some found fault. But the Saviour assured her and those around him, wherever the gospel should be preached throughout the whole world, "there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Her self-denial and love for her Saviour should be honorably mentioned in coming time throughout the world. The gospel forbids the worship of saints and heroes, but approves the honorable mention of the self-denial and virtuous deeds of the followers of Christ.

We, Christian friends, have met together on this centennial day of the organization of this church, to commemorate the merciful dealings of God toward us, and to make honorable mention of the self-denials and virtuous deeds of those who founded it, built its meeting-houses, and sustained the preaching of the gospel during the century which this day closes.

The clock of time has tolled off only eighteen such periods since the Son of God hallowed the earth with his sacred footsteps. Only one and a half additional such period this very month, carries us back to the time when

our Pilgrim Fathers, in great deprivation and peril, in order that they might enjoy religious freedom and bequeath this priceless boon to us, their children, were tossed upon the billows of the Atlantic. One additional such period carries us back to the time when the red man of the forest erected his wigwam, perhaps on the very spot where we are now assembled. One-half century previous to the formation of this church there was not a single white inhabitant within the present limits of this town. And what a contrast with the present! Then, five or six weeks of uncomfortable sailing were necessary to make a voyage to Europe; now, palatial steamers traverse the distance in ten or twelve days. Then, it took five or six weeks to send intelligence from London to Boston; now, important news reaches us before the hour on which it was dated. Then, no swift car brought together the ministers for the council. It was only the very year that this church was organized that the first stage coach in America commenced running, and that was between Boston and Providence, when it took two days to traverse the distance of forty-one miles. The fear of the Indians had hardly died away. The trials of the revolutionary war soon commenced, and the depreciation of currency must have made it exceedingly difficult for the people to bear the necessary expenses of supporting the gospel. These were times that tried men's souls.

Atkinson originally was a part of Haverhill, which was settled in 1640. It comprises a portion of the territory conveyed to the inhabitants of Pentucket (now Haverhill) by the Indians, Passaquo and Saggahew, with the consent of their chief, Passaconnaway, by their deed, now in existence, dated Nov. 15, 1642. No settlement was made till eighty-five years later, when, in 1727 or 1728, Benjamin Richards, of Rochester, N. H., Johnathan and Edmund Page and John Dow from Haverhill, moved into the present limits of the town. When the dividing line be-

tween New Hampshire and Massachusetts was settled, Atkinson, then a part of Plaistow, was assigned to New Hampshire. Plaistow was incorporated Feb. 28, 1749. The distance of the meeting-house and its incapacity to accommodate all the inhabitants, led to the separation of Atkinson from Plaistow, Aug. 31, 1767, and it was incorporated by the Legislature, Sept. 3, of the same year. It was named in honor of Hon. Theodore Atkinson, then a resident of Portsmouth. He was a member and President of the Provincial Council, Chief Justice, and possessed a large landed estate in the town known as the "Atkinson farm."

Atkinson, though small in territory, and its population never exceeding 600, is "beautiful for situation," and its prospect in every direction extensive and pleasing. The land gradually rises. Five miles to the south-east, Haverhill and Bradford, with their beautiful churches, are spread out as a panorama before our vision. On a clear day, Andover, with its seminaries of learning, and the steeples of the churches in Newburyport can be seen. The rays of the sun, reflected from the ocean, sometimes greet us. In the verdure of spring and the varied hues of autumn such an extensive landscape is charming.

The increase of population from the first settlement of the town was rapid. In 1775, three years after the formation of the church, it numbered 575,—more than the average from that time to the present.*

The town extended a call to Mr. Stephen Peabody, Feb. 26, 1772, and voted to give him "160 pounds lawful money, as a settlement, upon condition that the salary begin 66£, 13s. and 4 pence lawful money the first year, and add on 40 shillings per year till it amount to 80 pounds per year."

*By the United States census, the population of Atkinson was as follows :

1790, 479	1820, 563	1850, 600
1800, 474	1830, 555	1860, 546
1810, 556	1840, 567	1870, 488

They also voted to give him "ten cords of wood per year as long as he carry on the work of the ministry in Atkinson." Mr. Peabody accepted and was ordained the 25th of Nov., 1772, the day we celebrate, at which time the church was organized at the house of Mr. Samuel Little, the grandfather of Capt. Enoch Little, who resides in a house erected on the original site. There were nineteen members: Rev. Stephen Peabody, pastor; Tristram Knight, the great grandfather of Dea. Bailey Knight; Benjamin Richards, one of the original settlers of the town, and Abigail, his wife; John Webster; Abel Merrill, the father of Dea. John Merrill, and Ruth, his wife; Nathaniel Cogswell, the grandfather of the present Cogswell family, and Judith, his wife; Daniel Poor, the great grandfather of Jeremiah Poor, and Abigail, his wife; Stephen Dole, and Mary, his wife; Jonathan Sawyer, and Elizabeth, his wife; Nathaniel Knight, who was chosen the first deacon, and Abigail, his wife; Eldad Ingals, and Sarah, the wife of John Knight, who was the grandmother of Dea. Bailey Knight. There were but eighteen persons besides the pastor, ten men and eight women. How greatly are the church and town indebted to these faithful, self-denying, original members of the church. May their memory and influence never cease.

The covenant of the church, which was adopted at its organization, and which is given in the manual of the church, was evangelical, recognizing the existence of God in three persons, man's inability, and dependence upon God's method of reconciliation. After the Unitarian controversy, and previous to the death of Mr. Peabody, a briefer covenant, more distinctly recognizing the divinity of Christ, was used. There is no record of the adoption of this covenant, nor of the covenant itself. It was lost while Rev. Stephen Farley was acting pastor. After the loss of this covenant, the church used the covenant of the church in Dedham, of which Rev. William Cogswell was

pastor, till the adoption of the present Articles of Faith and Covenant in 1864. A creed is to a church what ballast is to a ship. And there can be no doubt that much of the prosperity, if not the very existence of this church, is, in a great measure, owing to the evangelical creed which it has always held.

REV. STEPHEN PEABODY.

On this day of commemoration, the pastors that have ministered to the church are deserving of special remembrance. The first pastor was Rev. Stephen Peabody. He was a native of North Andover, Mass.; born Nov. 11, 1742, and graduated at Harvard College in 1769. In procuring his education he was mainly dependent upon his own efforts, and aided himself by waiting upon the students, a custom then prevailing. In person, Mr. Peabody, or, as he was more commonly called, Sir Peabody or Parson Peabody, was commanding. He was full six feet high, well proportioned, and distinguished for physical strength. His complexion was dark, his eyes black, and his hair bushy and curling. During his ministry he wore the usual ministerial dress of the times, which is thus described by Dr. Samuel Gilman: "A three-cornered beaver hat, a large single-breasted coat sweeping down on each side with an ample curve, a vest full twice the length of these degenerate days, ending on both sides with large pockets and lappets; a snow-white plaited stock; his nether garments terminated at his knees and fastened with white silver buckles, and long black silk stockings extending from the knee to the foot, and shining square-buckled shoes." In such a dress he must have presented a stately appearance, and had it not been for his benignant countenance and courteous manners, he must have awed the youthful part of his parish. His musical powers were extraordinary. Sacred music was his delight, but he

could sing with perfect taste "the delightful old anthems of Arne or Purcell, or from the oratorios of Handel." In his rides about town, the solitudes and woods were made to echo with his melodious voice. When he had arisen in the morning and built the fires, except on Sabbath mornings, he would awake the sleepers of his household by singing up stairs and down, "The bright rosy morning peeps o'er the hills," or some other stirring song. When there was no chorister, he himself would lead the music. On one of these occasions it is said, a little dog which he had trained at home in singing a duet, and which, unbeknown to the family, had followed them to church, joined with his master in singing, to the great amusement of the audience. Besides vocal music, he was skillful in playing the violin and bass viol.

As a preacher, he possessed fair talents; on funeral occasions he was peculiarly impressive and tender, his own tears often leading the way for the tears of others. On these occasions his favorite hymn was "Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound." His extraordinary social qualities made him a favorite at weddings. While he would not be called a man of pre-eminent piety or a doctrinal preacher, there is evidence that he was evangelical in faith and a truly godly man. The statement of Dr. Gilman that he was "an inveterate Arminian, showing no mercy to Calvinism," and that later in life "he advanced still farther into what is denominated Liberal Christianity," is not borne out by testimony. It is reported from Dea. William Page that Mr. Peabody said that if he "were cast upon a solitary island and could have but two books, these would be the Bible and Edwards on the Affections." Surely no one who took real pleasure in studying Edwards on the Affections could be called an Arminian. At the installation of Rev. Josiah Webster, over the church in Hampton, N. H., in 1808, Mr. Peabody preached a truly evangelical sermon from the text: "*I determined not to know anything*

among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." 1 Cor. 2: 2. On the same occasion he gave the charge, the following extracts from which show clearly his evangelical views: "Preach not yourself, but Jesus Christ the Lord. Represent to your hearers the absolute necessity of regeneration, of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Bear an open testimony against those tenets which induce men to depend for salvation upon their own works; on the other hand, point out the danger of a dead faith. Oppose the modern, prevailing opinion that all mankind will at last be saved: it is an unfounded, dangerous sentiment, and can in no view be advantageous, but is pernicious to society." The covenant also of the church, prepared doubtless by him, and used during the latter part of his ministry, distinctly acknowledges the supreme authority of the scriptures and the Divinity of Christ. Besides his influence as a minister, he was a patron of learning. He took a very active part in founding Atkinson Academy, and doubtless it owes its origin and continued existence more to him than to any other one individual. In the original act of incorporation it is stated: "Whereas the Rev. Stephen Peabody and others have petitioned the general court, praying that an Academy may be established in the town of Atkinson." From this it is evident that he was one of the principal actors in securing its establishment. When the present building was erected after the burning of the first, its expense was \$2,500. Of \$400 subscribed, he paid \$100, and subsequently when the institution was in danger of being suspended by legal proceedings, he nobly and heroically assumed the whole responsibility; and afterwards when it became necessary to pay the debt, he paid seven-eighths of the whole, and Esquire Vose, the preceptor, one of Atkinson's noblest citizens, paid the other eighth. The paying of this debt bore heavily upon these noble men for fifteen years before it was refunded, which was done only about a year before

Mr. Peabody's death. Notwithstanding this embarrassment, Mr. Peabody always had a word of cheer and a helping hand for all who sought his assistance in procuring an education. Atkinson can never forget its obligations to its first pastor, and especially should all graduates of Atkinson Academy honor and revere the name of Rev. Stephen Peabody.

From the £160 settlement and his salary, Mr. Peabody erected in the beginning of his ministry an elegant house on one of the most commanding and eligible sites in Atkinson. After his death it was sold to Dr. Isaac B. Hovey, whose second wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Hovey now occupies it. In front of it, Mr. Peabody with his own hand, aided by Joseph Richards, then a lad, set out three elm trees two rods apart, which now are over three feet in diameter, and doubtless at the end of another century will mark the place where stood the residence of the first minister of Atkinson. It is an interesting circumstance that the daughter of Mr. Richards, who aided Mr. Peabody in planting these beautiful elms, subsequently became the first Mrs. Hovey, and sat under their shade, a forcible illustration of the good which we do to others returning upon ourselves.

Mr. Peabody was aided in his work by two excellent wives. The first wife was Miss Polly Haseltine, of Bradford, aunt of the distinguished teacher of that name, and also of the first Mrs. Judson. He married soon after his settlement, Jan. 19, 1773. He had two children: Stephen, born Oct. 6, 1773, and Mary, born Feb. 15, 1775, who married Hon. Stephen Peabody Webster, of Haverhill, N. H. Mrs. Peabody deceased Sept. 17, 1793, aged 51. She was a prudent woman, who "looked well to the ways of her household." After her death, Mr. Peabody visited Rev. John Shaw, of Haverhill, Mass., when Mr. Shaw advised him to marry. He replied, "I would if I could find as good a wife as you have." Not long after, Mr. Shaw

died, and Mr. Peabody married his widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw, who was the daughter of Rev. William Smith, of Weymouth, Mass., and sister of the wife of John Adams, the second President of the United States, and also sister of the wife of Judge Richard Cranch, who died in Quincy, Mass., Oct. 16, 1811, and who was the father of Judge William Cranch, of Washington, D. C. She was a woman of superior talents and refinement, a devoted Christian, and faithful wife. Her death was sudden. On Saturday she sent into Esquire Vose's to borrow the first volume of Scott's Commentaries, saying she meant to read the Bible through with the comments. But early next morning, Mr. and Mrs. Vose were called in to see her die. Her sudden death should be a warning to all to be ready whenever the messenger of death shall call. She was born April 7, 1750, and died April 9, 1815, aged 65. She left three children by her first husband, a son and two daughters, one of whom married Joseph B. Felt, LL. D., of Boston, Mass. She had no children by Mr. Peabody. Mr. Peabody continued in the pastoral office till his death, which occurred May 23, 1819, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. On his tombstone are the following words: "He was ordained the first minister in this town, Nov. 25, 1772, and until his death sustained the office with dignity, possessed the love and confidence of his people, and ardently sought the interests of his charge and mankind. He was a man of good talents, a sound divine, a faithful minister, and a Christian in word and deed. He was to his loss, the friend of those in distress, the patron of merit and literature." His portrait and that of the second Mrs. Peabody are to be seen in the Academy library. During the forty-six years of his ministry, seventy-five persons united with the church besides the nineteen original members. He married 313 couples, and baptized 140 children and adults.

REV. JACOB CUMMINGS.

After the death of Mr. Peabody the church remained for nearly thirteen years without a settled pastor. During this time the pulpit was supplied by different individuals, but mainly by Revs. Jacob Cummings and Stephen Farley, teachers in the Academy. Mr. Cummings was a native of Warren, Mass., a graduate of Dartmouth College in 1819, and Andover in 1822, when he became teacher in the Academy for two years and supplied the desk. He is spoken of as a good man and faithful preacher. April 28, 1824, Mr. Cummings was ordained over the church in Stratham, where he labored for eleven years with success, 42 persons uniting with the church. For thirteen years, from 1843 to 1856, he was pastor of the church at Hillsboro Bridge. In 1856, he removed to Exeter, where he continued without charge till his death, which occurred June 20, 1866, in the seventy-third year of his age. He was a successful and useful man.

REV. STEPHEN FARLEY.

After Mr. Cummings, Rev. Stephen Farley taught the Academy and supplied the pulpit for seven or eight years. He was a native of Hollis and a graduate of Dartmouth in 1804. He was a kind and gentlemanly man and a popular preacher. From 1806 to 1818 he was pastor of the church in Claremont, where the meeting-house was enlarged to accommodate the audience. During the twelve years of his ministry in that place, 94 persons were received into the church, 49 of whom were received during an extensive revival in 1816, which was commenced and carried on mainly by others. During this revival he made public confession of his fear that he did not possess real spiritual life. After this revival, the people having fears

in regard to his orthodoxy, he resigned his charge. His experience in Atkinson was similar to that in Claremont. The revival in 1826 commenced in the Academy. He did not oppose it, but appointed meetings and aided it. But he did not seem to be at home in a revival. From various causes, his theological views become unsettled, and after leaving Atkinson he became a Unitarian. And though in the early part of his ministry at Claremont he published two sermons against Universalism, after his change of views he sometimes preached for that denomination. But he was too spiritually minded to be popular either with the Unitarians or Universalists, and there can be but little doubt that he was a real Christian. He was a man of more than ordinary talent, and under favoring circumstances might have taken a high position. And on this centennial day we cannot think of this amiable and scholarly man, who preached seven years to this church, his wife sometimes deranged and his theological views unsettled, without feelings of sadness. We trust he is now in a better world with all doubts removed, and he rejoicing with many who united with the church under his ministry. He died at Amesbury, Mass., Sept. 20, 1851, aged 71. During the thirteen years which intervened between the death of Mr. Peabody and the settlement of Mr. Spofford, 42 persons united with the church.

REV. LUKE A. SPOFFORD.

Feb. 28, 1832, the church gave a call to Rev. Luke A. Spofford, who accepted and was installed on the 18th of April following. Mr. Spofford was a native of Jaffrey, a graduate of Middlebury College, Vt., in 1815, and studied theology with Dr. Payson, of Ringe. From 1819 to 1825 he was pastor of the church in Gilmanton; from 1826 to

1829, of the church in Brentwood ; and of the church in Lancaster from 1829 to 1831, when he was settled here. He was dismissed at his own request, Jan. 20, 1834. For two years after, he was pastor of the church in Scituate, Mass., when he removed to Amherst, Mass., that he might better educate his two sons, Richard Cecil and Henry Martyn. Cecil, a young man of great promise, died soon after graduating ; the other is Hon. Henry M. Spofford, of Pulaski, Tenn. After leaving Amherst he was pastor of the church in Chilmark, ~~N. H.~~, when he removed to Indiana and died at Rockville, Oct. 10, 1855. During the two years he was in Atkinson there was a revival. He was a doctrinal preacher, "rigidly orthodox and strong on election," which he often preached. He was peculiarly adapted to indoctrinate churches, and we can but regard it as an overruling providence that he was sent to this place after the mild and somewhat unorthodox ministry of Mr. Farley. In person, he was tall, straight, and of light complexion, social with his friends, and a model father. He died in debt to the New Hampshire Home Missionary Society \$250, the amount of a legacy to the Society by his father, but his son, Hon. H. M. Spofford, during the past year paid the debt, with interest, amounting to nearly \$700. Ten persons united with the church during his ministry of two years.

REV. SAMUEL TOLMAN.

Less than a month after the resignation of Mr. Spofford, "the Congregational Society in Atkinson was formed"—Feb. 19, 1834. The following year the present house of worship was erected. After the erection of the church, Rev. Samuel H. Tolman supplied the pulpit till July 5, 1837, when he was installed and continued till Oct. 29, 1839. He was a native of Dorchester, Mass., and a graduate of Dartmouth in 1806. He first studied medicine,

the profession of his father, but becoming pious, he studied theology with Rev. John M. Whiton, D. D., of Antrim, N. H., and entered the ministry. When he came to Atkinson he had been twenty-two years in the ministry, eight of which (from 1828 to 1836) were spent at So. Merrimac, where there were two precious revivals, and the church increased from eighteen to eighty members. After he left here he preached five years (from June, 1839, to April, 1844) at Lempster, where there was also a revival, and thirty-five added to the church. During his first year here (1838), four united with the church. The following year there was a revival, and thirteen more were received. During the three years and a half of his ministry, thirty-two persons were received, a greater number, according to the time, than that of any other ministry here. The revivals experienced under his ministry show that he was a godly man, and a successful minister. After forty years of ministerial labor, he returned to Atkinson, April, 1854, to spend the evening of his days. He continued in active sympathy and co-operation with the church and its minister till his death, which occurred April 2, 1856, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and his remains repose in yonder grave yard. Rev. Samuel H. Tolman, of Lenox, Mass., formerly of Wilmington, in the same State, is his son. His youngest daughter, Harriet, married Rev. Charles Secombe, now of Frankestown, N. H.

REV. SAMUEL PIERCE.

After Mr. Tolman, Rev. Messrs. Mitchell, Deming, Parsons, of Oberlin, and others supplied the desk for about three years. In 1842, Rev Samuel Pierce commenced preaching, and about a year later, April 19, 1843, was ordained as pastor. Mr. Pierce was son of Capt. Samuel Pierce, of Haverhill, Mass., and great-grandson of

Nathaniel Peaslee, Esq., of the same place. He graduated at Dartmouth in 1835, and at Andover in 1840. He died less than a year after his ordination, March 27, 1844, at the age of twenty-seven. He lived and died in the family of Hon. John Vose, and was buried in Atkinson burying-ground, where stones, erected to his memory by Mrs. Judith Cogswell, mark his resting place. He was much respected and beloved.

REV. JESSE PAGE.

After the death of Mr. Pierce, Rev. Norman Hazen and others supplied the desk till June, 1845, when Rev. Jesse Page commenced supplying the pulpit. He was a graduate of Dartmouth College in 1831, of Andover Theological Seminary in 1835, and was pastor of the Congregational church, North Andover, Mass., from September, 1835, to June, 1843. He continued as acting pastor here for 24 years till March, 1869, when by reason of sickness which affected his lungs, he was obliged to cease ministerial labor. During his ministry there were three precious revivals: one in 1851, when seven united with the church; one in 1855, when sixteen were added, and another in 1863, when seventeen were received,—forty in all. Besides these, there were many conversions of students who united elsewhere, and are now filling places of usefulness and honor. Mr. Page also prepared the present excellent articles of faith and covenant, and church manual. By his influence abroad and efforts at home he has done much to promote the prosperity of the academy and church. He is still spared to be with us on this centennial day, aiding and benefiting us by his co-operation and counsels. The whole number received during the twenty-four years of his ministry was 101.

REV. CHARLES F. MORSE.

After the failure of Mr. Page's health, the pulpit was supplied for about three years by students from Andover Theological Seminary. June, 22, 1872, Rev. C. F. Morse commenced supplying the pulpit, and was installed pastor of the church, Sept. 17, of the same year. Mr. Morse is a native of Salem, Vt., the seventh in direct line from Anthony Morse, who settled in Newbury, Mass., in 1635. He is a graduate of Amherst College in 1853, and of Andover Theological Seminary in 1856. He sailed as a missionary to Turkey, Jan. 5, 1857, and returned to this country, June 30, 1870. He labored among the Bulgarians of European Turkey.

During the one hundred years which closes to-day, fifty years, eight months and eight days, the church has had settled pastors; about thirty-four years, acting pastors; and sixteen years, supplies by various individuals. It is said the church has never been without religious services; when there has been no minister, services have been conducted by members of the church. During the greater part of the time from the death of Mr. Peabody till the coming of Mr. Page, the church received aid from the N. H. Home Missionary Society. The whole number of members during the hundred years, including the nineteen original members, is 289. The present number is eighty.

THE COGSWELL FAMILY.

Besides the ministers, there are others who have done much to promote the welfare and prosperity of the church. Prominent among these has been the Cogswell family. Nathaniel Cogswell, who had been a merchant thirty or forty years in the adjoining town of Haverhill, moved into Atkinson in 1766, two years before the incorporation of

the town. Religious services were held in his house, previous to the erection of the first church. He also gave the land for the church so long as it should be used for that purpose. He and his wife were among the nineteen original members.

He was the father of nineteen children, eight of whom entered the service of their country during the Revolutionary War, and performed, it is said, thirty-eight years of service, a greater amount, it is believed, than was performed by any other family in the country. And, what is remarkable, these sons all survived the war, and became honored citizens of the country they had fought to free. One of them was Dr. William Cogswell, a Hospital Surgeon in the army of the Revolution. He was born in Haverhill, Mass., July 11, 1760, and died at Atkinson, Jan. 1, 1831. From 1810 to the time of his death, he was an active member of the church, and his wife, Mrs. Judith Badger Cogswell, who united with the church at the same time with her husband, continued an active, earnest member, distinguished for benevolence and warm friendship for her pastor, till the time of her death, Sept. 30, 1859, in the ninety-fourth year of her age. She gave the present communion table and the chairs beside it, and, in 1845, the bell, which weighs 1300 pounds and cost about \$300. Dr. Cogswell also gave the baptismal basin. He was one of the first trustees of Atkinson Academy, and for many years president of the board of trustees. But the greatest usefulness of this honored couple was the rearing and educating of a family of nine children, eight of whom lived to grow up and fill places of honor and usefulness in the church and in society. The eldest of these was Rev. William Cogswell, D. D., who received religious impressions while attending the academy under the instruction of Hon. John Vose. These impressions ripened into active Christian life while in Dartmouth College, and he wrote home stirring letters to his parents and relatives, and Sept. 23,

1810, he united with the church in Atkinson, on the same day with his parents and two sisters, Julia and Hannah P., and received baptism with all his brothers and sisters, nine in number, from Mr. Peabody. He was pastor of the church in Dedham fourteen years, from 1815 to 1829, and Agent and Secretary of the Education Society from Aug. 20, 1829 to April 14, 1841. Afterwards he was Professor of history and national education in Dartmouth College, and president and professor in Gilmanton Theological Seminary. He died at Gilmanton, Apr. 18, 1850, in the sixty-third year of his age. He was the author of "Letters to Young Men," "The Assistant to Family Religion," "The Christian Philanthropist, or Harbinger of the Millennium," and "The Theological Class Book." A copy of this last, perhaps the most useful, through the liberality of his brother, Francis Cogswell, Esq., of Andover, Mass., has been placed in each family in the town. He advised and encouraged the church to erect its present house of worship and solicited funds to aid them. He laid the corner stone at sunrise on the Fourth of July, 1835, when the emotions of his heart filled his eyes with tears. His wife composed the original hymn sung at the dedication. Francis Cogswell, besides the liberality above mentioned, was the first to deposit, April 17, 1871, one thousand dollars in the Haverhill Savings Bank, in Haverhill, Mass., toward a permanent memorial fund, the interest of which should be expended under the direction of this church in the support of preaching and sustaining the Gospel ministry in Atkinson.* He also gave the Bible and hymn book for the pulpit, and the two large chairs by the side of it. Rev. Nathaniel Cogswell, of Yarmouth, Mass., and Dr. George Cogswell, of Bradford, Mass., two other brothers, have each given a thousand dollars for the same object as that above mentioned. Joseph B. Cogswell, of this town, another brother, gave the land upon which the church is

*See Appendix, A.

erected, and July 4, 1870, he wrote his brother, Francis, asking him if he would not contribute toward a fund for the church, and it is said he has remembered the church in his will, to an amount equal to that of his brothers. Thus from the first establishment of this church to the present time and onward, it has been and will be under great obligations to the Cogswell family. May their prayers accompany their beneficence and prove the means of spiritual blessings to unnumbered souls.

THE PAGE FAMILY.

Among the original settlers of the town were Jonathan and Edmund Page, from Haverhill, Mass. Edmund Page was born Nov. 7, 1709, and died Aug. 15, 1768, four years before the organization of the church. His third son, Capt. Jesse Page, who served in the Revolutionary war, was born Feb. 16, 1740 or 1741. He united with the church June 11, 1780, and was distinguished for piety. His oldest son was Col. William Page, who united with the church, Nov. 29, 1801, and was elected deacon, Dec. 29, 1817, which office he held till his death, Sept. 13, 1847. The oldest son of Col. William Page was Rev. Jesse Page, who for twenty-four years, nearly one-fourth of the time we this day commemorate, has been your acting pastor. He suggested and has urged the necessity of an endowment of the church, not only as essential for its own prosperity, but also as a necessary preparation for the prosperity and success of the Academy, and deposited the second thousand dollars toward this endowment. Another son was Rev. William Page, who for more than twenty years was a faithful, judicious and earnest minister of the gospel. He died Oct. 18, 1861.

HON. JOHN VOSE.

No one can study the history either of the church or Academy in Atkinson, without being impressed with the wide-spread and salutary influence of Hon. John Vose. He was a native of Bedford; born July 10, 1766. He fitted for college at Atkinson Academy, and boarded in the family of Rev. Mr. Peabody. The city boys, who boarded in the same family, at first were disposed to make fun of the youth in homespun. But Mr. Peabody told them, "If I mistake not, that young man will outstrip you all." A prediction which proved true. He graduated with honor at Dartmouth College in 1795, and immediately became preceptor of the Academy, and continued its honored and distinguished instructor for twenty-one years. He was preceptor of Pembroke Academy for eleven years, and returned to Atkinson in 1831. To no other instructor is Atkinson Academy so greatly indebted. He nobly paid one-eighth of the debt which was likely to suspend the institution. While in Pembroke he was chosen Representative to the General Court, and subsequently State Senator while in Atkinson. It was while he was a member of the Senate that the famous action of the Legislature, reversing the charter of Dartmouth College occurred. Mr. Vose courageously told the majority: "you may decide this case as you please, but you will find that higher powers will reverse your decision." This was the case in which Daniel Webster so highly distinguished himself in the Supreme Court of the United States, when the decision of the State was reversed. Considering this was a complicated case, without precedent in law, Mr. Vose's declaration shows him to have been a man of unusually clear and logical mind. He was the author of two works on Astronomy, a large and a small. He united

with the church in Atkinson, July 20, 1806, and ever after was an active, consistent Christian. He was chosen deacon previous to his removal to Pembroke, and again on his return. He died May 3, 1840, aged 73. He is said to have been "one of the best of men," leaving behind him but few superiors, and not many equals." Though his means were limited, he contributed to every good enterprise, and trained up his family to give systematically. His wife, Mrs. Lydia (Webster) Vose, from West Haverhill, Mass., the sister of Hon. Stephen Peabody Webster, of Haverhill, in this State, was well qualified to be his companion. Naturally gay and high-spirited, she experienced religion after the death of her "Little Mary," and united with the church at the same time with her husband, and ever after was a most earnest, active, and consistent Christian. Before the Sabbath School was established, she had a gathering of children and youth on Saturday at her own house, when she imparted to them religious instruction. It has been said but few have been so ready to forego their own interests to promote the general welfare, as Mrs. Vose. Her influence is still felt by the church. Let her memory be cherished.

Among those who united with the church, May 3, 1839, were Mr. Ebenezer Todd and his wife, Betsey Todd. Two of their sons graduated at Dartmouth College. One of them, William C. Todd, for six years was a successful preceptor of the Academy, and has generously contributed toward the erection of the new parsonage.

DEACONS AND OTHERS.

There have been eleven deacons. The first deacon was Nathaniel Knight from Newbury, Mass., one of the original members of the church, chosen July 15, 1773. He was grandfather of John Kelly, Esq. He was a noted singer

and is said to have deaconed off the hymns. He died in 1776. His brother, Joseph Knight, five years his senior, was chosen Nov. 19, 1779, and held the office thirty-seven years, till Feb. 2, 1816. He was grandfather of Deacon Daniel Knight, and also of the late Deacon Knight, of Portsmouth, husband of Mrs. Helen C. Knight. The third was Benjamin Hale, elected Dec. 3, 1780, and died Dec. 4, 1781. He lived on the east road, and was the grandfather of Messrs. Josiah and Moses L. Hale, of Newburyport, Mass., who, with other members of the family have contributed liberally towards the erection of the church and parsonage. John Merrill, elected Nov. 5, 1783, and died in office, Jan. 11, 1797. Hon. John Vose, elected Dec. 21, 1817, held the office twelve years. Col. William Page, elected Dec. 29, 1817, died in office, Sept. 13, 1847. Josiah Grover was elected June 1, 1820, and resigned Sept. 20, 1836. Moses Dow, 2d, elected May 22, 1840, continued in office till his death, Dec. 26, 1868. He was great grandson of John Dow, one of the original settlers of the town, from Haverhill, Mass. Dea. Franklin Gilbert was elected at the same time with Mr. Dow. Dea. Bailey Knight and Dea. Daniel Knight were elected March 4, 1870.

The records show that among the members of the church for the century there have been thirty-seven Knights, seventeen Dows, sixteen Littles and nine Noyeses. Among the latter have been four sisters who have sung in the choir more than thirty years each, and one of them, Mrs. Dea. Gilbert, was in the choir more than forty years. Another of these sisters, Mrs. Eliza W. Noyes, recently deceased, has given \$200, the interest of which is to be devoted to the support of preaching. Many others might be mentioned. Many noble deeds of self-denial have been done, especially by the ladies. Perhaps some persons, who have been able to contribute but their mite, have done more to promote the welfare of the church than some who have acted a more prominent part. And He who

will not allow a cup of cold water given in His name to go unrewarded, will reward and honor all at the great day according to their love and devotion.

THE CHURCHES.

Notwithstanding the reason assigned for the separation of the town from Plaistow, was the better accommodation of its inhabitants with religious privileges, at their first meeting, Nov. 3, 1767, they refused to build a meeting house. But on the 29th of March, 1768, the town "voted to build a meatting house." "Voted that the plase between Left. Johnathan Pages and John Dows, the easternly most nole, on the North side of the way be the Plase to set the Meatting house." "Voted that the Meatting house Be Built By subscription by those that have a min to and take the pew ground for there pay." The town appointed no building committee, but those interested evidently had a meeting, and appointed a committee, which, from the deeds for the pew ground, appears to have been composed of the following persons, viz.: "Samuel Little, John Knight and John Ingalls, gentleman; Thomas Noyes, John Dow, Moses Kelly and Benjamin Hale, yeomen." This committee apparently commenced their preparations for building, but there was dissatisfaction in regard to its location, and a town meeting was warned for July 18, when it was "Voted to reconsider the vote of March 29; but being unable to agree, "Voted not to fix the place at this meeting." Meanwhile the Committee put up the frame on the original site, but felt unable to finish, and in the warrant for a town meeting, Oct. 18, an article was inserted "To choose a committee to sell the pew ground in said Meeting house frame at a vendue to obtain money for finishing said house." This article was voted down. But the Committee seem to have succeeded in completing the building

during the winter and spring following. For, "on the 18 of Dec. A. Domini 1769, in the tenth year of His Majesty's reign," they deeded to James Noyes "five feet square for a pew ground," but as it was designated as being between the pews of John Ingalls and Joseph French, it is evident that other pews had been previously sold. This pew ground was deeded for "five pounds lawful money."

The building seems to have been patterned after Noah's Ark. As nearly as can be ascertained, it was forty by fifty feet, without a steeple, the ridge-pole running east and west, while the pulpit was on the north side. It was entered by three doors, one on each end and one on the south side opposite the pulpit. A row of box pews went round the sides and in the centre were two rows of pews on each side of the broad aisle, five feet by seven and a half, except the east row, which was divided into three pews on each side. The seats turned up, and when let down at the close of prayers, produced a clatter which would have astonished modern ears. It had a high box pulpit with sounding board perched high over head, which at the present day might excite fears for the safety of the minister. There were galleries on three sides. It was situated east of the burying ground and north of the road leading to Hampstead. In this building, without carpets or fire, excepting the few last years, did our fathers worship for sixty-six years, till the present house was erected in 1835. It was taken down in 1845. To the aged part of the community this house must have had most sacred associations. In it their fathers worshiped. In it they were consecrated to God. In it they first attended church, and there did they consecrate themselves to God. Sacred edifice! But thou and the greater part of those who worshiped in thee have passed away.

THE PRESENT MEETING HOUSE.

As early as 1818 difficulty arose in regard to the meeting house. In March, 1819, three months previous to the death of Mr. Peabody, the town "Voted to let the Universalists have the privilege of using the meeting house the present year their proportion of Sundays, according to the taxation." In March, 1820, "Voted that each denomination, viz.: Congregationalists, Universalists, Baptists and Methodists, have the liberty to supply the pulpit with a teacher of their own persuasion their proportion of Sundays, according to the taxes each denomination pays." This vote was repeated from year to year till 1827, when it was voted "that the Universalist Society occupy the meeting house the fourth Sunday in April next, and the fourth Sunday in each of the next seven months." At the same time it was "Voted that the Methodists occupy the meeting house the third Sunday in every month the year ensuing. In 1830, "Voted that the Universalist Society occupy the meeting house the fourth Sabbath in every month, and the second Sabbath enough to make up their proportion. This vote was repeated for several years. The occupation of the house by different denominations was a serious embarrassment to the church, and one of the causes which led to the resignation of Mr. Spofford. Less than a month after his resignation, Feb. 19, 1834, the Congregational Society of Atkinson was formed. Encouraged and aided by Rev. William Cogswell, D. D., and Rev. Jesse Page, the Society proceeded to erect the following year the present house of worship. It stands on land given by Joseph B. Cogswell, Esq., and is forty by fifty feet, and was dedicated Oct. 21, 1835. It cost, besides the labor given, \$1800.00, a little more than one-third of which was given by individuals and churches from abroad,

and the rest raised by the sale of pews, and contributions by the church members and citizens. Such a building would now cost more than twice the amount.*

MUSIC.

It is not appropriate that we close a review of the church for a century without a brief notice of the service of song which constitutes so important a part of the worship of God. During Mr. Peabody's ministry, "Watts' Hymns," without "the select," were used, and the "Ancient Harmony," so full of soul stirring music. 'Favorite tunes of Mr. Peabody were Judgment, Old Jordan, New Jerusalem, and others. After Mr. Peabody, Watts and Select Hymns were used, till the present autumn, when the Sabbath Hymn Book was introduced. The first instrumental music, as far as remembered, was a violin, then a bass viol, so long played by Jesse Dow. The present pipe organ was procured in 1866, at a cost of \$500. In raising the money the people in Atkinson were assisted by friends abroad. The small organ for the Sabbath School and social meetings was procured in 1869, at a cost of about \$140, the money being raised by a levee.

We cannot close without a reference to the influence of this church. One hundred years ago, on a rainy day, nineteen persons, eleven men and eight women, met together at a private house, and feeling their obligation to sustain the institutions of the gospel, consecrated themselves to God and his service. Had they been less self-denying, or less courageous; had they said "we will go to neighboring towns to worship," how different would have been the result! Literally, scores, who are now in heaven, or filling places of usefulness and honor in the world, in all probability would not have been converted.

*For a full statement respecting the parsonage, not completed at the delivery of this address, the reader is referred to appendix B.

The more religious part of the community would have removed, and irreligion and immorality would have flourished on soil now distinguished for intelligence and morality. And how great has been its influence upon education. Had there been no church in Atkinson, there would have been no academy, and had there been no academy it is not probable one-fifth of the more than forty persons who have entered the learned professions from Atkinson would have entered college or practised the healing art. And probably not 500 out of the more than 4000 students who have enjoyed the privileges of education here, and who are exerting a wide influence in the world, would have ever enjoyed equal advantages for an education. And each one of these will exert an influence over others which shall never cease. How great has been the influence of this little church! But what shall be its influence for the future? Shall it be built up and flourish? Shall the academy continue to exert an elevating and benign influence during the century to come? Our fathers did not shrink from responsibility. They consecrated themselves and their children to God and relying upon divine strength, went forward. And if we imitate their example may not even greater results be achieved?

Our fathers, where are they? Not an individual who was present one hundred years ago at the organization of this church and ordination of Mr. Peabody is now among the living. They have gone. At the end of another century not an individual now present will be living. Others will occupy our places. But what shall be our record? Let us be influenced by the sacred associations which cluster around this hour, reconsecrate ourselves, our children and our possessions to God, and resolve that by his assistance we will faithfully discharge the duties devolved upon us. And may His blessing attend the pilgrim church down the ages.

APPENDIX.

A.

MEMORIAL FUNDS.

The following conditions annexed to his gift by Hon. Francis Cogswell, have been copied by subsequent donors:

* * * "Whereas the said Francis Cogswell has on this 17th day of April, A. D. 1871, deposited in the Haverhill Savings Bank, in said Haverhill, Mass., the sum of \$1,000 to the credit of the Deacons of the Congregational Church in said Atkinson, as a perpetual deposit in trust, on condition that the sum thus deposited is not to be removed or withdrawn except by a decree of court or other legal proceedings. That the principal sum thus deposited is not to be diminished, and that the dividends or interest only are to be paid to the order of the Deacons for the time being of said church, and expended under its direction in the support of preaching and sustaining the gospel ministry in said Atkinson.

Now, therefore, in consideration thereof, we, the undersigned, Franklin Gilbert, Bailey Knight and Daniel Knight, the Deacons of the Congregational Church in Atkinson, N. H., hereby accept said contribution or donation in trust, on the conditions annexed thereto, and we covenant and agree with said Francis Cogswell, his heirs, and executors, and administrators, that we, the said Deacons, will and that our successors in said office shall, in all coming time, permit the said sum of \$1,000 to remain on deposit in said Haverhill Savings Bank, as a perpetual trust, until the same shall be ordered to be removed by due process of law.

That the principal sum of \$1,000 shall not be diminished by any act of ourselves, or our successors in said office of Deacons.

That the dividends or interest only as received shall be faithfully expended in the support of preaching and in sustaining the gospel ministry in said Atkinson, under the direction of said church.

That we and our successors in said office of Deacons will enter in a book kept for that purpose, the amount of said contribution or donation under the name of '*The Francis Cogswell Donation for the support of preaching and sustaining the Gospel ministry in Atkinson, N. H.*,' and regularly enter all the receipts as income therefrom, and all the expenditures made from said income, stating the particulars thereof, for which proper vouchers shall be taken and filed, which book, accounts and vouchers are to be exhibited to the church yearly, at its annual meeting, after having been examined and audited by the Standing Committee, or some other committee appointed for that purpose, and approved, if found to be correct, by the church." Signed by the deacons.

The bequest of Joseph B. Cogswell, Esq., is as follows:

"I give and bequeath to the Congregational Society in Atkinson the sum of Five Hundred Dollars, to be invested in good and profitable Stocks and the interest of the same shall from time to time be laid out for repairs on the place of worship of said Society.

Provided however if said Society shall ever build a new House of Worship on the land where the House now stands—the above sum of Five Hundred Dollars may be taken and used by the Society to build such new House.

And I do give a further sum of Five Hundred Dollars to said Congregational Society in Atkinson, the interest of which shall be annually expended for the support of preaching the Gospel in said Society."

B.

THE PARSONAGE.

As a necessary step toward securing a pastor, the Ladies' Society in the spring of 1871 voted that their funds be devoted to a parsonage, and a few months later, determined to solicit subscriptions for this object, a nucleus being furnished by a conditional gift from William C. Todd, Esq. The members of the congregation co-operated in the effort with great unanimity and self-sacrifice, and almost all persons for any reason interested in the welfare of the place, added such aid as was in their power, even those families to whom the church was already so much indebted. After the call of Rev. C. F. Morse, the house was built on seven-eighths of an acre of land purchased of Dea. Bailey Knight, under the supervision of a committee chosen by the Congregational Society, consisting of Rev. Jesse Page, Dea. Bailey Knight, and James M. Nesmith, an experienced builder who personally superintended the work. It is an interesting coincidence and significant of "the good hand of our God upon us," that the house was occupied by the pastor on the first anniversary of the day on which it was resolved to attempt a subscription, and the last bill contracted in its erection paid almost within a year from the day its foundations were commenced; the whole amount furnished through the ladies of the congregation in subscriptions and all other ways being \$3210.07. To estimate the actual expense of the house as it stands should be added the value of blinds and fence otherwise secured, and a large amount of gratuitous labor.

This property is conveyed to the Deacons of the Congregational Church in Atkinson, and "their successors in said office, and assigns forever in trust as follows, viz.: to hold and keep the same as a parsonage for the use and occupancy of the minister or pastor of said church and society, for the time being free of charge or rent, so long as said society shall pay or cause to be paid the cost and expense of repairs, taxes, insurance and legal assessments thereon; and upon their failure so to do, to collect and receive the amounts necessary therefor from rents and income for the use and occupation of said estate, and to hold and securely invest any and all sums of money received by them in connection with this estate, or from proceeds of any sale of the same, after deducting the necessary expenses above recited, for the support and maintenance of the gospel ministry and preaching in said Atkinson, the annual interest or income only to be so expended; provided, however, that the said estate shall on no consideration be pledged or mortgaged for the payment of any sum of money or the performance of any condition or contract, and shall not be at any time sold or conveyed by said trustees without the votes of said society and church first had at lawful meetings, called for that purpose, concurring in and directing said sale and conveyance; a sale with the assenting votes of said society and church as aforesaid, and reinvestment of the whole or part of the proceeds in another parsonage estate, to be holden in the same manner as is here provided for this, and any balance of proceeds invested and held as hereinbefore recited, to be deemed a full compliance with the terms of this trust."

C.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINISTRY.

The following persons from the town have become preachers of the Gospel:—

REV. MOSES DOW,
REV. WILLIAM COGSWELL, D.D.,
REV. NATHANIEL COGSWELL,
REV. JESSE PAGE,
REV. WILLIAM PAGE,
REV. NATHANIEL GROVER,
REV. JAMES MARSH HOW DOW,
REV. JOHN BADGER MERRILL.

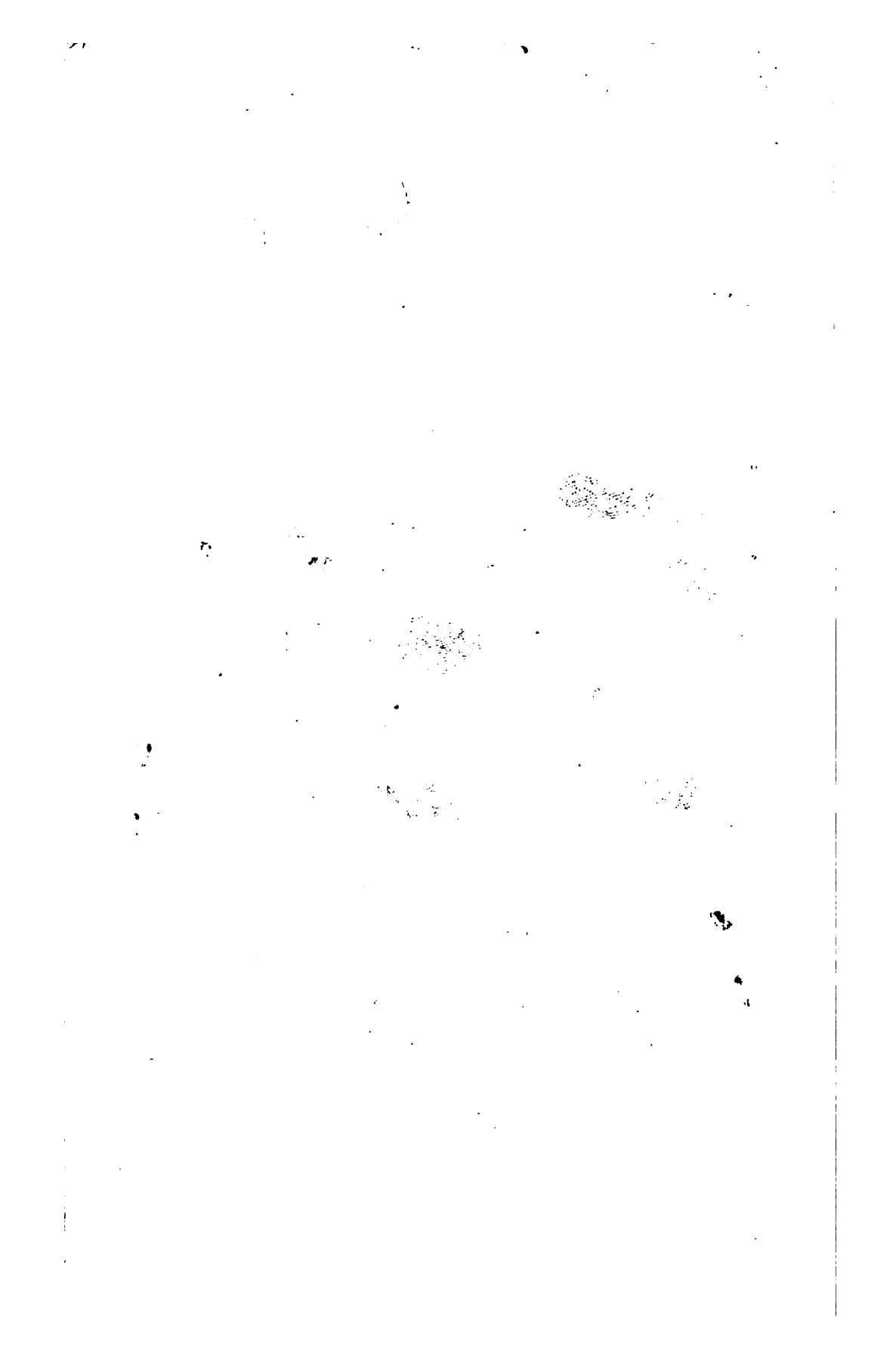
D.

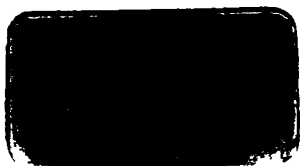
ATKINSON IN THE WAR OF THE REBELLION.

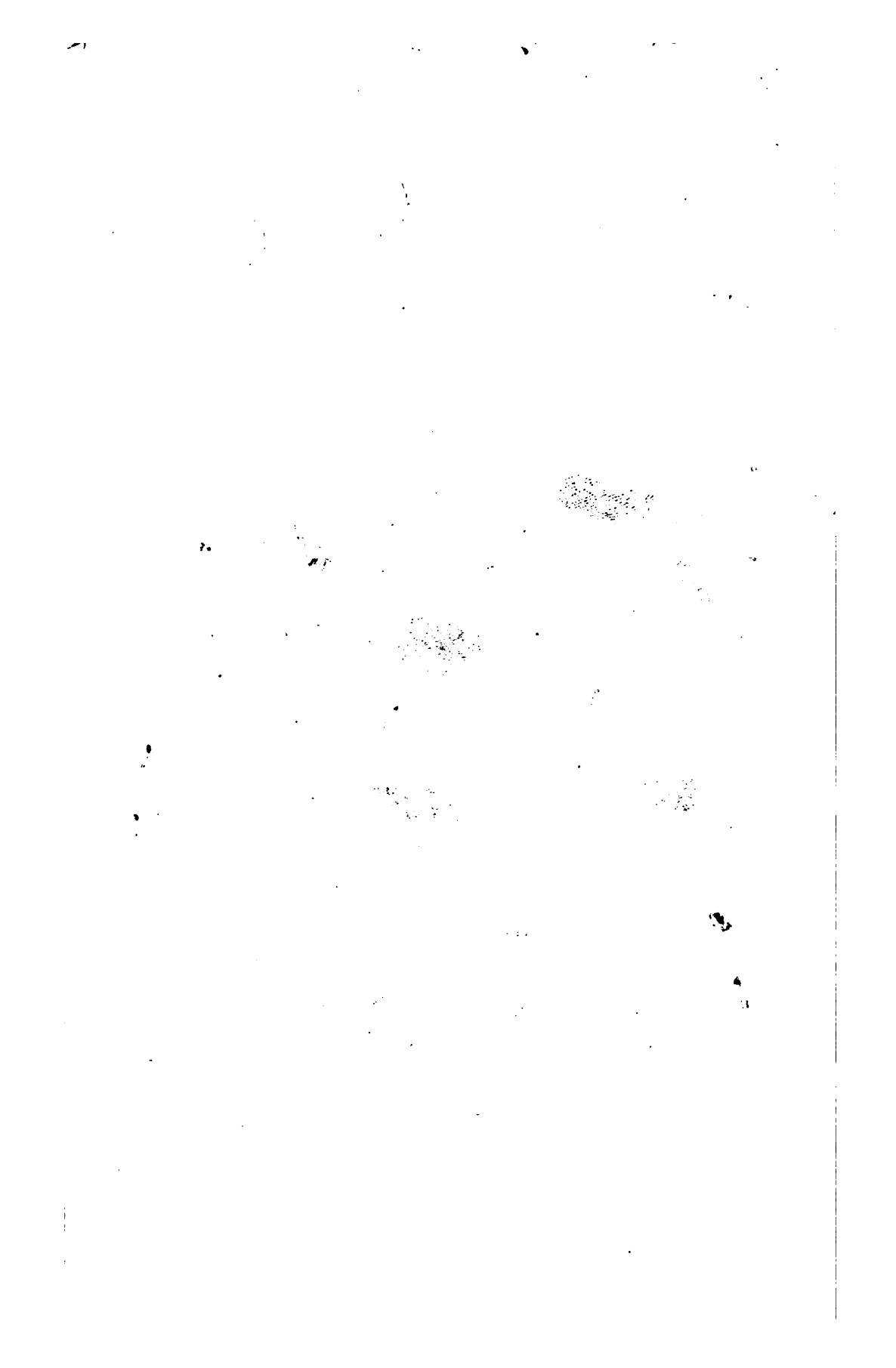
The following residents of Atkinson served in the War of the Rebellion, very few towns in New Hampshire furnishing so large a number in proportion to their population :—

JOHN E. AUSTIN,
MILES M. BOWLES,
EBENEZER BUCK,
DAVID O. CLARKE,
JOSEPH CARLTON,
WARREN CLOUGH,
WARREN COWDRY,
CHARLES DOW,
JOHN DOW,
GEORGE P. DOW,
H. DOW,
JOHN FOLINSBEE,
LOREN HEATH,
GEORGE W. HEATH,
JACOB HALL,
IRA HURD,
WILLIAM HURD,
FRANK P. IRISON,
JOHN S. C. KELLY,
HENRY KELLY,

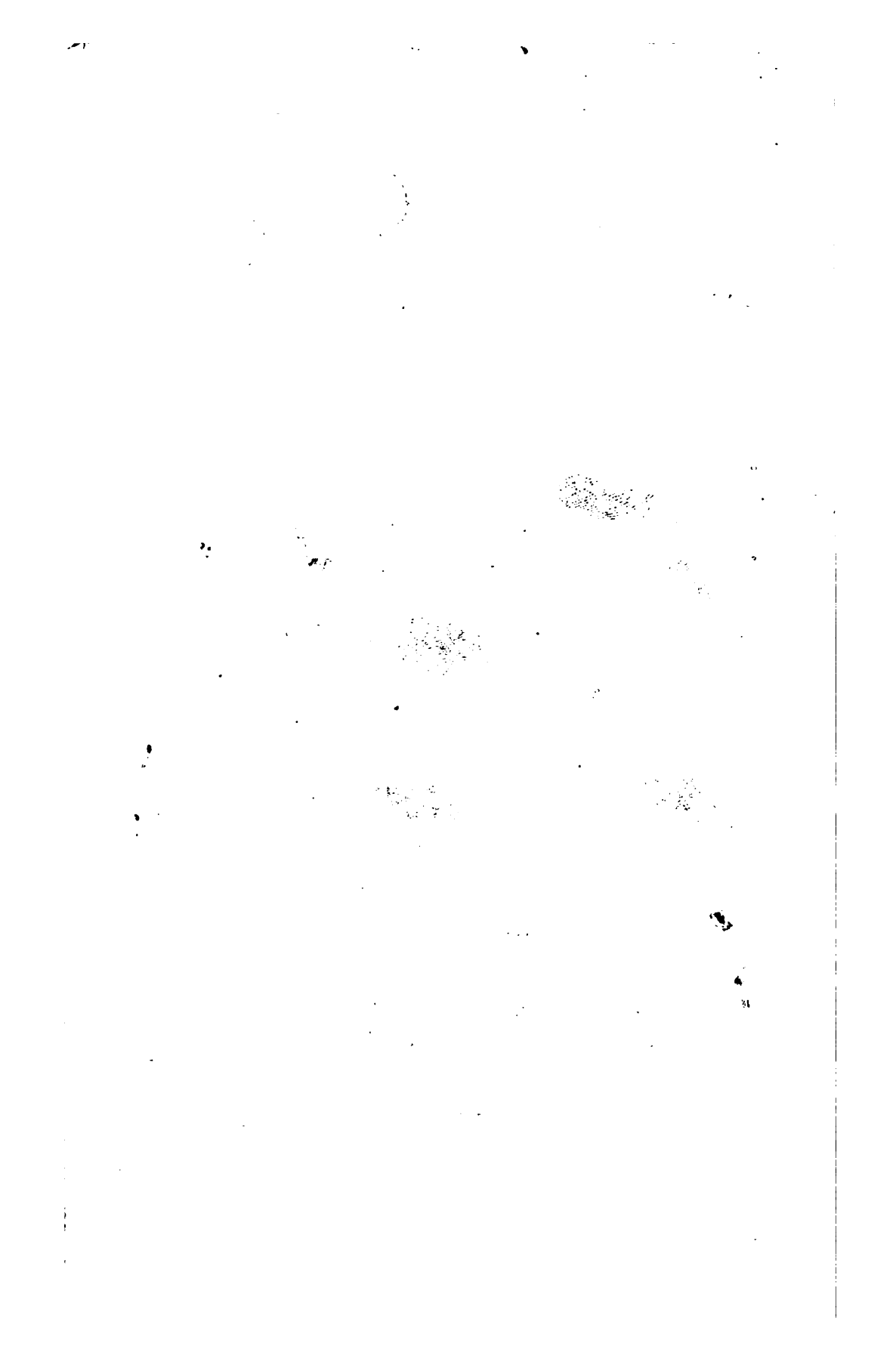
JOHN H. KNIGHT,
S. BURLY MASON,
EDMUND F. McNEIL,
ALONZO McNEIL,
ARTHUR L. MERRICK,
MARCUS MERRICK,
JACOB L. MORSE,
THOMAS ADDISON NOYES,
GILMAN NOYES,
BYRON NOYES,
CYRUS FRANK NOYES,
EDWARD F. NOYES,
ALBE NOYES,
FREDERICK W. NOYES,
PERKINS NICHOLS,
JOHN RYAN,
CHARLES D. RICHARDS,
FRANK W. RICHARDS,
ORRIN S. RICHARDS,
JOHN H. SMITH.













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